

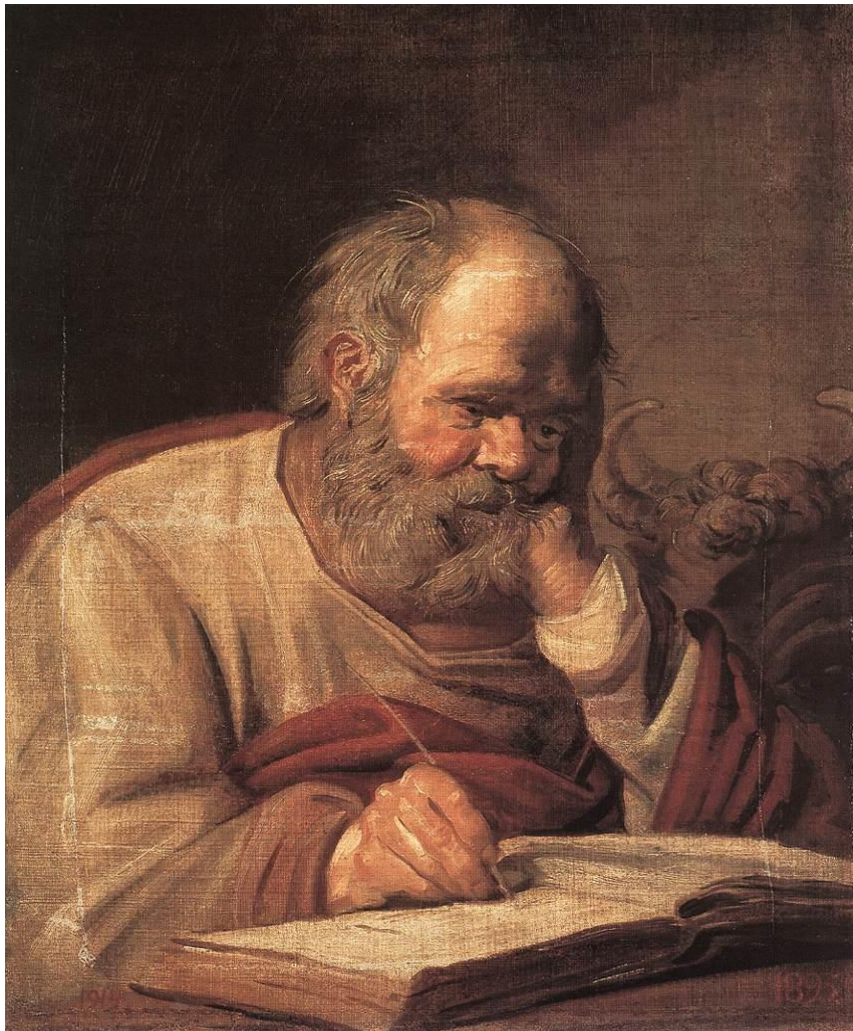
Author - STEVEN R. DOUGLAS 2017

# THE HOLY BIBLE **NKJV** REFERENCE GUIDE

**NEW TESTAMENT**

**BOOK 42**

**LUKE**



**Saint Luke by Frans Hals**

## SUMMARY

The tradition from the earliest days of the church has been that Luke, a physician and a close companion of the Apostle Paul, wrote both Luke and Acts. This would make Luke the only Gentile to pen any books of Scripture.

The Gospel of Luke is unique in that it is a meticulous history, an orderly account consistent with the Luke's medical mind often giving details the other accounts omit.

Luke's history of the life of the Great Physician emphasizes His ministry to and compassion for Gentiles, Samaritans, women, children, tax collectors, sinners, and others regarded as outcasts in Israel.

Since Luke was a Gentile, his references to the Old Testament are relatively few compared to those in Matthew's gospel, and most of the OT references are in the words spoken by Jesus rather than in Luke's narration.

The Gospel of Luke gives us a beautiful portrait of our compassionate Savior. Jesus was not turned off by the poor and the needy; in fact, they were a primary focus of His ministry.

The Gospel of Luke and the Book of Acts are closely related. Written by the same author and for the same purpose, both were addressed to a Christian named Theophilus and were designed for the purpose of presenting to him a complete and well authenticated narrative of the early history of the Christian movement.

In the introductory paragraph of the gospel, Luke tells us that many lives of Jesus were written on the basis of eyewitness reports. He does not find these narratives satisfactory in all respects and so has set himself the task of examining the records and writing a new account that will establish for all interested parties the certainty of the things about which Christians were instructed.

The first paragraph in Luke's gospel is especially informative to readers of the New Testament, for it describes the way in which the two narratives attributed to Luke came to be written.

Luke evaluated the materials he wanted to use and then supplemented them in whatever manner seemed to him to be the most appropriate. In writing his gospel, he did not simply piece together bits of information that he gathered from different sources; rather, his own contributions include selecting and organizing these materials, along with whatever interpretation was necessary to make a complete and unified narrative.

We can be quite certain that Luke made use of at least three different sources: The Gospel of Mark, the Q source, or "The Sayings of Jesus," and a third source that is usually designated as L to distinguish it from other biographies.

The Gospel of Matthew may have existed by the time Luke wrote his account, but nothing indicates that Luke knew anything about Matthew or made any use of it. Luke was a companion of Paul, and he was quite familiar with the different interpretations of the life of Jesus held by different groups within the Christian community.

## SUMMARY Continued

His purpose was to minimize the differences between the various groups and thus promote harmony within the church. He was aware, too, of the criticisms concerning Christianity that were being made by people who were outside the church, and he especially wanted to make an effective reply to those who claimed that Jesus was a revolutionist and hence an enemy of the Roman government.

By giving to his readers an authentic account of the life and teachings of Jesus, Luke could show that the charges made against Jesus were false. He was quite sure that if people knew of the kind and sympathetic way in which Jesus met individuals, they would be won by the attractive power of Jesus' wonderful personality.

In the opening chapters of the gospel, Luke relates a number of stories having to do with the birth and childhood of Jesus, including the announcements made to Zechariah and to Mary concerning the births of John and of Jesus, and the story of the shepherds watching their flocks at night who came to worship the newborn child.

We also have accounts of the journey of Joseph and Mary to Bethlehem and of the child being wrapped in swaddling clothes and placed in a manger because there was no room for them in the inn. After eight days, the child was circumcised, and later he was blessed by Simeon and by Anna.

These stories are not reported in the other Gospels, and we cannot be sure whether Luke learned about them from an older source or from oral traditions. Luke also recorded the only story we have in the New Testament about Jesus' boyhood.

When Jesus was twelve years old, he went to Jerusalem with his parents to attend the Feast of Passover. On the way home, when his parents discovered that he was not with them, they returned to the Temple and found him involved in a profound discussion with prominent Jewish rabbis.

After the introductory chapters, Luke follows the outline of events as they are recorded in the Gospel of Mark. However, he does not follow Mark's narrative as closely as Matthew does. Occasionally, he leaves out some material and substitutes an item of his own.

For example, he substitutes an illustration of Jesus' preaching in the synagogue at Nazareth in place of Jesus' proclamation at the beginning of his Galilean ministry. Luke includes a considerable number of Jesus' teachings that are not recorded in the other Gospels. If he and Matthew both used the same source Q, evidently Luke used more material from it than did Matthew.

In Luke we find the parables of the Good Samaritan, the Publican and the Pharisee who went to the Temple to pray, the rich man and Lazarus, the lost coin, the prodigal son, the unjust steward, the rich fool who would tear down his barns and build greater barns in order that he might store his goods, and the story of Zacchaeus, who climbed a tree in order that he might see Jesus.

Each of these parables and stories illustrates what Luke regards as an essential characteristic of Jesus' work. Jesus was not trying to raise opposition to the Roman government, nor was he lacking in sympathy or understanding of those whom the Jews regarded as foreigners.

## SUMMARY Continued

He places the highest value on good character regardless of a person's race or nationality. For example, although many Jews looked with disfavor on the Samaritans, Luke emphasizes that of the ten lepers whom Jesus healed, only the one who was a Samaritan expressed his gratitude for what Jesus had done.

And in the parable of the man who fell among thieves on the road to Jericho, a Samaritan befriended the man and saw to it that he was given proper care. Throughout his gospel, Luke emphasizes the fact that Jesus was a friend not only to Jews but to Samaritans and to so-called outcasts from different races and nationalities.

Chapters 9–18 are often referred to as Luke's long insertion, for in them he departs from the sequence of events in Mark and introduces a section that includes much of the most valued portions of Jesus' teachings.

Here, we have a report of Jesus sending out the "seventy" to carry the message of the kingdom to different places. The number "seventy" is especially significant: In the Jewish Torah, the number refers to all the nations of the earth.

Luke wants to make it clear that Jesus' mission is for all humankind and not just for the Jews. In the story that describes the conversation between Jesus and Zacchaeus, we have the statement For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost.

And in the introductory chapters of the gospel where Luke, like Matthew, traces the genealogy of Jesus, we find the same emphasis on the universality of Jesus' mission. Matthew traces the ancestry back to Abraham, who is regarded as the father of the Hebrew people; Luke traces it back to Adam, the father of all humanity.

In reporting Jesus' discourses with his disciples concerning the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the world, Luke does not emphasize the nearness of the event as the other evangelists do.

Toward the end of the gospel, he describes the events leading up to the crucifixion, stressing the point of Jesus' innocence of any wrongdoing toward either Jews or the Roman government. Pilate, the Roman governor, declares Jesus innocent of any crime, and a Roman centurion protests Jesus' execution with the words, Surely this was a righteous man.

The gospel closes with an account of the resurrection and the subsequent meetings of Jesus with the disciples and others. As two men are walking to the village of Emmaus, Jesus joins them, but the men do not recognize Jesus until he sits at a table with them and blesses the food that they are about to eat.

Later, Jesus meets with the eleven disciples in Jerusalem and overcomes their suspicions by showing his hands and feet to them. They cook some fish, and Jesus partakes of the food with them.

Then follows a farewell discourse to the disciples, during which Jesus gives them instruction concerning what they should do. Afterward, they go together as far as Bethany, and after blessing the disciples, Jesus departs from them.

## SUMMARY Continued

If the Gospel of Matthew could be called the Jewish gospel because of its leanings toward ideas that were typically Jewish, there is an equal amount of evidence for calling the Gospel of Luke the Gentile gospel.

Actually, neither gospel is purely Jewish or purely Gentile in its account of the life and teachings of Jesus, but it is fairly obvious in the case of each of them that the authors were influenced by the point of view with which they were associated.

Luke was a companion of Paul, who came to be known in Christian circles as the Apostle to the Gentiles. Paul's interpretation of Christianity as a universal religion did much to eliminate the barriers between Jews and Gentiles.

He emphasized the idea that all humans are sinners and in need of salvation. Jesus was, for him, the supreme example of what the power of God can do in a human life. This point of view evidently made a deep impression on Luke and is reflected throughout the various parts of his gospel.

One sees it first of all in Luke's account of the genealogy of Jesus, which is traced to Adam rather than to Abraham, thus indicating that Jesus was representative of the entire human race rather than simply a member of the Hebrew race, and it is seen in the attitude taken by Jesus toward the Samaritans, the Romans, and others outside the Jewish fold.

When Jews and Gentiles are contrasted in Luke, often the Gentiles are presented in the more favorable light. For example, in the story of the Publican and the Pharisee, both of whom go to the Temple to pray, only the Publican is commended for the attitude that he expresses.

Following his journey into the northwest country, Jesus pronounces woes on Capernaum and other Jewish communities and states, but it will be more bearable for Tyre and Sidon at the judgment than for you.

This saying does not mean that Luke rejects the Jewish people but that membership in the kingdom of God is dependent on the quality of a person's life rather than on racial or religious backgrounds.

Paul has often been referred to as a Christian mystic because of his conviction that salvation comes only by a union of an individual and God. When the Spirit of God dwells in the human heart and mind, as it did in the person of Jesus, then a person belongs to God's kingdom.

But Jewish apocalypticism regarded the coming of the kingdom as a future event, when the Son of Man would descend from heaven. In the Gospel of Luke, we find a blending of these two ideas. Luke, like Matthew, makes use of the apocalyptic section in Mark's gospel but with certain modifications.

The nearness of the event is not stressed as much, and Luke recognizes that there is a sense in which the kingdom is already present. When Jesus was accused of casting out demons because he was exercising the power of a greater demon, he replied, But if I drive out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come to you.

## SUMMARY Continued

In the story concerning Jesus and Zacchaeus, the coming of the kingdom is portrayed in a similar manner. When Zacchaeus stands up and says, Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay it back four times the amount.

Jesus replies, today salvation has come to this house. These passages, as well as many others that might be mentioned, indicate that Luke was sympathetic to Paul's mystical conception of the Christ who lives and abides in human hearts. Luke does not abandon the apocalyptic conception of the coming of the age's end, but he emphasizes the quality of living that alone can prepare one for the coming of the future event.

As nearly as we can determine, the Gospel of Luke was written toward the end of the first century, probably between the years 85–90 A.D. By this time, Christianity was fast becoming a worldwide movement.

Starting in Jerusalem, it spread to the surrounding territory and reached as far west as the city of Rome. With the increasing numbers of Christians, the movement not only attracted attention but encountered opposition from several different quarters.

Rumors circulated to the effect that the founder of the movement was a dangerous character who was trying to overthrow the Roman government. Luke was a peacemaker, and he was anxious to show that Jesus was not the type of person that these critics supposed Jesus to be.

Therefore, Luke takes particular pains to point out that Jesus had no quarrel at all with the Roman government. Pilate finds no fault in Jesus, and a Roman centurion declares Jesus innocent. Although Pilate finally consents to Jesus' crucifixion, it is not until he is pressured by Jews that he does so.

Jesus' whole ministry was conducted in a quiet and peaceful manner. He was the friend of the poor and the outcast and had no political ambitions of his own and no intention of trying to interfere with the orderly processes of government.

Writing from the point of view of the Christian church toward the end of the first century, Luke is convinced that the characteristics of the movement that were then being emphasized had been present from the movement's very beginning.

He shows, for example, that the opposition to Jesus and his work was present during Jesus' early ministry in Galilee and was demonstrated in people's reactions to the sermon Jesus preached in the synagogue at Nazareth.

Those who opposed Jesus continued their harassment throughout Jesus' entire public career, and the cause of this harassment was their resentment of the criticisms that Jesus made of their formalism and hypocrisy. Determined to silence Jesus' criticisms, they invented false charges concerning his disloyalty to the government.

Luke shows the broad humanitarian character of Jesus' work that was manifested from the first in Jesus' attitude toward the Samaritans and others whom the Jews regarded as their enemies. Jesus never failed to commend those who had a humble and contrite heart, and it made no difference whether they were Jews or Gentiles.

## SUMMARY Continued

At the time of Luke's writing, the Spirit of Christ was regarded as the guiding factor in the life of the Christian church. That this guiding factor was only a continuation of what had been present all along is shown by Jesus' repeated references to the Spirit of God throughout the period of his public ministry.

What Jesus taught was now accepted to be in harmony with what the church believed. Many of the statements attributed to Jesus were now interpreted in light of what had happened already, implying that at least some of his statements were intended as definite predictions of what was going to occur.

## NKJV SELECTED SCRIPTURE

- 1:13** But the angel said to him, Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for your prayer is heard; and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John.
- 1:14** And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth.
- 1:15** For he will be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink. He will also be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb.
- 1:16** And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God.
- 1:17** He will also go before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.
- 1:26** Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth,
- 1:27** to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary.
- 1:30** Then the angel said to her, Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God.
- 1:31** And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name Jesus.
- 1:32** He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David.
- 1:33** And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end.
- 1:34** Then Mary said to the angel, How can this be, since I do not know a man?
- 1:35** And the angel answered and said to her, The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God.
- 1:70** As He spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets, Who have been since the world began,
- 1:71** That we should be saved from our enemies And from the hand of all who hate us,
- 1:72** To perform the mercy promised to our fathers And to remember His holy covenant,
- 1:73** The oath which He swore to our father Abraham:
- 1:74** To grant us that we, Being delivered from the hand of our enemies, Might serve Him without fear,
- 1:75** In holiness and righteousness before Him all the days of our life.

**NKJV SCRIPTURE Continued**

- 2:49** And He said to them, *Why did you seek Me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business?*
- 2:50** But they did not understand the statement which He spoke to them.
- 4:33** Now in the synagogue there was a man who had a spirit of an unclean demon. And he cried out with a loud voice,
- 4:34** saying, Let us alone! What have we to do with You, Jesus of Nazareth? Did You come to destroy us? I know who You are--the Holy One of God!
- 4:35** But Jesus rebuked him, saying, *Be quiet, and come out of him!* And when the demon had thrown him in their midst, it came out of him and did not hurt him.
- 4:36** Then they were all amazed and spoke among themselves, saying, What a word this is! For with authority and power He commands the unclean spirits, and they come out.
- 6:27** *But I say to you who hear: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you,*
- 6:28** *bless those who curse you, and pray for those who spitefully use you.*
- 6:29** *To him who strikes you on the one cheek, offer the other also. And from him who takes away your cloak, do not withhold your tunic either.*
- 6:30** *Give to everyone who asks of you. And from him who takes away your goods do not ask them back.*
- 6:31** *And just as you want men to do to you, you also do to them likewise.*
- 6:32** *But if you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them.*
- 6:33** *And if you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same.*
- 6:34** *And if you lend to those from whom you hope to receive back, what credit is that to you? For even sinners lend to sinners to receive as much back.*
- 6:35** *But love your enemies, do good, and lend, hoping for nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High. For He is kind to the unthankful and evil.*
- 6:36** *Therefore be merciful, just as your Father also is merciful.*
- 6:37** *Judge not, and you shall not be judged. Condemn not, and you shall not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven.*
- 6:38** *Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you.*
- 6:42** *Or how can you say to your brother, Brother, let me remove the speck that is in your eye, when you yourself do not see the plank that is in your own eye? Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck that is in your brother's eye.*
- 6:45** *A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth evil. For out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.*
- 8:11** *Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God.*



**NKJV SCRIPTURE Continued**

- 8:12** *Those by the wayside are the ones who hear; then the devil comes and takes away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved.*
- 8:13** *But the ones on the rock are those who, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, who believe for a while and in time of temptation fall away.*
- 8:14** *Now the ones that fell among thorns are those who, when they have heard, go out and are choked with cares, riches, and pleasures of life, and bring no fruit to maturity.*
- 8:15** *But the ones that fell on the good ground are those who, having heard the word with a noble and good heart, keep it and bear fruit with patience.*
- 11:28** But He said, *More than that, blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it!*
- 16:13** *No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.*
- 20:35** *But those who are counted worthy to attain that age, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage;*
- 20:36** *nor can they die anymore, for they are equal to the angels and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection.*
- 21:13** *But it will turn out for you as an occasion for testimony.*
- 21:14** *Therefore settle it in your hearts not to meditate beforehand on what you will answer;*
- 21:15** *for I will give you a mouth and wisdom which all your adversaries will not be able to contradict or resist.*
- 21:18** *But not a hair of your head shall be lost.*
- 21:19** *By your patience possess your souls.*
- 21:25** *And there will be signs in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars; and on the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring;*
- 21:26** *men's hearts failing them from fear and the expectation of those things which are coming on the earth, for the powers of heaven will be shaken.*
- 21:27** *Then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.*
- 21:28** *Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near.*
- 21:34** *But take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that Day come on you unexpectedly.*
- 21:35** *For it will come as a snare on all those who dwell on the face of the whole earth.*
- 21:36** *Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man.*
- 22:3** *Then Satan entered Judas, surnamed Iscariot, who was numbered among the twelve.*
- 22:4** *So he went his way and conferred with the chief priests and captains, how he might betray Him to them...*

## NKJV SCRIPTURE Continued

- 22:31** *And the Lord said, Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat.*
- 22:32** *But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren.*
- 22:47** And while He was still speaking, behold, a multitude; and he who was called Judas, one of the twelve, went before them and drew near to Jesus to kiss Him.
- 22:48** But Jesus said to him, *Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?*
- 22:49** When those around Him saw what was going to happen, they said to Him, Lord, shall we strike with the sword?
- 22:50** And one of them struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his right ear.
- 22:51** But Jesus answered and said, *Permit even this.* And He touched his ear and healed him.

## BIBLE TIMELINE

6 BC	Augustus Taxes the Roman Empire	Luke 2
8 AD	The Boy Jesus at the Temple	Luke 2:41
28 AD	Instructions on Prayer	Luke 11
29 AD	Jesus Sends out the Seventy-two	Luke 10
30 AD	Jesus Speaks More Parables	Luke 12 - 16
30 AD	Jesus Cleanses the Ten Lepers	Luke 17

## CHARACTER Definitions

**LUKE** - While Luke's name never appears in this gospel, ancient Christian tradition unanimously ascribes the book to him. One ancient prologue written to introduce the gospel describes Luke as a Syrian from Antioch. With this piece of information, we can deduce that Luke was probably not Jewish.

Paul also listed him with other Gentiles in his greetings to the Colossians (4:14). The ancient prologue goes on to state that Luke eventually settled in the Greek city of Thebes, where he died at age 84.

Luke's own introduction to his gospel indicates that Luke composed the letter with the purpose of providing a careful rendering of the events of Christ's life in chronological order.

As a physician, Luke would have been trained as a careful observer, a quality that would have been invaluable in this project. The result was the first part of a two-volume work written to Theophilus. We know the subsequent volume as Acts.

## CHARACTERS Continued

Much of the dating of the book of Luke depends on the dating of Acts. Luke's second volume cuts off with Paul imprisoned in Rome, before Paul's death (AD 68) and even before the persecution of Christians broke out under Nero (AD 64). It stands to reason that the book of Luke was completed before Acts. But when?

Acts 21:17 says that Luke accompanied Paul on the apostle's final visit to Jerusalem, a visit that occurred in AD 57–58. Eventually, the Jews had Paul arrested in the temple, a two-year ordeal which ended with Paul's imprisonment in Caesarea.

Luke likely used this time apart from Paul to begin gathering information for writing the gospel from primary sources—those people who had witnessed the ministry, death, and resurrection appearances of Jesus.

If Luke took to writing his gospel soon after the information was gathered, then it would have been completed around AD 60, after Paul had been transferred to a Roman prison.

Luke's interest in people is undeniable. Much of the material unique to Luke's gospel involves Jesus's interactions with individuals, many of them on the fringes of acceptable society—sinners, women, and children among them.

Like Matthew and Mark, Luke recorded the incident of a woman coming to pour perfume on Jesus's feet. But Luke was the only gospel writer to point out the fact known to all present that she was an immoral woman.

In a similar way, we find in Luke alone the conversation between the robbers crucified alongside Jesus, one of them defending Jesus and receiving the promise of paradise. Luke's portrayal of Jesus reveals in our Lord a man come to minister and show compassion to all people, no matter their station in life.

Just as Matthew portrays Jesus as the King, and as Mark reveals Him as the Servant, so Luke offers a unique perspective of Jesus as the Son of Man. This phrase, "Son of Man," was Jesus's favorite way to refer to Himself.

Most famous among the people unique to Luke's gospel is the tax collector Zaccheus, a short man who had to climb a tree to see over the crowds as Jesus approached his town. Jesus ended up sharing a meal with Zaccheus at his house, much to the chagrin of the local religious leaders.

When Zaccheus expressed his regret over his former way of life and vowed to make restitution, Jesus responded with what became the theme of Luke's gospel: For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost. Luke portrayed Jesus as God's ideal Man, who offers salvation to all humanity—Jew and Gentile alike.

The richness of Luke's portrayal of Jesus has profound implications for our relationship with God today. Jesus walks through Luke's gospel illustrating His deep and abiding care for people, regardless of what they have done or their status in society.

MAP REFERENCES

